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Advancement of women

Activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women

Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, prepared pursuant to Assembly resolution 39/125 of 14 December 1984.

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Report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women

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I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a review and update on the programme and activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for the year 1999. The past year has been significant in a number of ways. It was the year when the first UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan for 1997-1999 ended and the next Strategy and Business Plan (SBP) for 2000-2003 was developed. It was a year of intense activity in preparation for the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action. In parallel with national, regional, and global assessments of how far women have come on the road to gender equality, it was also a year for UNIFEM to reflect on its key achievements and challenges.

2. At a time when the world is beset by an increasing number of problems without borders — such as HIV/AIDS — and the fragmentation caused by ethnic and inter-State conflicts, the leadership and potential contributions of one half of the population cannot be ignored. UNIFEM is determined to promote, prepare and advocate for the inclusion of women in all of the venues in which critical decisions about the future of the world are taking place. At a time when globalization is the major phenomenon shaping the world, a United Nations women's fund is needed to develop strategies for managing both the emerging opportunities and the risks and to demonstrate how globalization can become pro-women, pro-poor people, and based on international human rights agreements.

3. The transition process at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) during 1999 presented important opportunities for UNIFEM and UNDP to clarify and further strengthen their relationship. In approving the new UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan for 2000-2003, the Executive Board recommended approval for UNIFEM to execute projects for UNDP in areas of its comparative advantage, as it does already for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNAIDS. Their decision (DP/2000/19, 2000/7), facilitates the establishment of new operational mechanisms that will allow UNIFEM and UNDP to consolidate a stronger partnership. Pursuant to the recommendation of the UNIFEM Consultative Committee, the two organizations will be working in the year 2000 to revise the 1987 "Guidelines on the operational relationship between UNIFEM and UNDP", to better reflect their respective roles in a changed environment, and to further strengthen their synergetic association, while bringing clarity to those areas where UNIFEM specific needs call for autonomy.

II. Programme

A. Overview

4. UNIFEM continues to be guided by its 1984 mandate, outlined in General Assembly resolution 39/125: to support innovative and experimental activities benefiting women, in line with national and regional priorities; to serve as a catalyst, with the goal of ensuring the appropriate involvement of women in mainstream development activities; and to play an innovative and catalytic role in relation to the United Nations system of development cooperation. In line with paragraph 335 of the Beijing Platform for Action,[1] UNIFEM programmes focus on women's economic and political empowerment and on advocacy for gender equality and women's empowerment through multilateral policy dialogue. UNIFEM is engaged in providing strategic and focused response to the follow-up and implementation of the Platform for Action through technical support at the national level through the resident coordinator system, in line with paragraph 49 of General Assembly resolution 51/69.

5. In fulfilment of the recommendations of the Platform for Action to strengthen its operational work and maximize the impact of its projects, UNIFEM programmes focus on three thematic areas: strengthening women's economic capacity; engendering governance and leadership; and promoting women's human rights, and eliminating all forms of violence against women. The three areas are addressed in relation to regional realities in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and, since 1998, in countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and are also placed within the larger global context.

6. In addition to focusing its programme by concentrating on three thematic areas, UNIFEM continued to play a catalytic role in promoting gender mainstreaming within United Nations operational activities and contributed actively to the implementation of the Secretary-General's reform proposals, especially at the field level. In all its

activities UNIFEM relies on five core strategies for promoting its empowerment approach: building the capacity and leadership of women's organizations and networks; leveraging political and financial support for women from a range of stakeholders in the development process; forging new synergies and effective partnerships among women's organizations, Governments, the United Nations system and the private sector; undertaking pilot and demonstration projects to test innovative approaches to women's empowerment; and building an operational knowledge base to influence gender mainstreaming.

7. In its work around the three thematic areas, UNIFEM adopts a results-based management approach and the principles of a learning organization. UNIFEM is committed to intensifying support for programmes that link micro-level and macro-level practical and policy actions in its three thematic areas to meet emerging needs and priorities for gender mainstreaming and for building the capacity of women's organizations as economic and political actors.

B. Strengthening women's economic capacity as entrepreneurs and producers

8. Fallout from the Asian financial crisis, accelerating globalization and trade liberalization, the rapid growth of information technology and the feminization of poverty have led UNIFEM to explore ways in which rights-based approaches can become the ethics to guide globalization on the macro, meso and micro levels. UNIFEM focuses especially on expanding access to the resources women need to create sustainable livelihoods, advocating for economic policies that take gender into account and maximize women's economic opportunities, and making visible women's economic contributions to policy makers and ensuring women's economic rights.

1. Expanding resources for sustainable livelihoods

9. UNIFEM has placed a growing emphasis on helping women to benefit from emerging markets so as to increase their bargaining power. By providing training and encouraging the sharing of experiences and business contacts, the Fund is assisting women's groups to improve the quality, packaging and marketing of their products. This leads to larger and more stable incomes and helps women recognize and seize new market opportunities, through the use of new technologies, inter alia.

10. In Nepal, UNIFEM sponsored women farmers in Jamuni in launching their own non-governmental organization. For the first time, this new pressure group is lobbying successfully for changes in irrigation and agricultural practice, bringing together various social services and negotiating with the Cotton Board for more favourable cotton prices. The model has been widely recognized, attracting donors and governmental officials to gather information for replication projects in other locations. In Senegal a new marketing centre has been established to publicize emerging agro-enterprises owned by women and to promote local food products as replacements for imported goods. In Burkina Faso, UNIFEM and the Centre canadien d'études et de cooperation internationale (CECI) continued working together with women shea butter producers to reach direct trade outlets, negotiate new sales contracts and secure credit for expanding their production by 370 tons per year. The producers held a major international trade fair that established new links with local and international buyers and that resulted in an export agreement with local factories for a price 50 per cent above past levels and a contract with a French cosmetic company. A marketing arm of the project is currently setting up a web site as a new promotional tool.

11. The second global trade fair of African Women Entrepreneurs (AFWE) in Addis Ababa featured hands-on training in packaging for export and in establishing links with international partners. UNIFEM supported the National Association of Kenyan Women in Business in holding a trade fair during the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Summit of Heads of State in Nairobi, where women traders from member countries displayed their goods and shared information and business contacts. Other trade fairs for women from Ecuador, Peru and the Caribbean region promoted cultural exchange and offered new commercial opportunities.

12. In Zimbabwe, UNIFEM cooperated with UNICEF on assisting ex-commercial sex workers to set up the Gweru Women AIDS Prevention Association (GWAPA). The association provides information to members on HIV/AIDS and assists in developing income-generating activities that reduce the women's

dependency on commercial sex work. GWAPA now conducts a wide range of activities in workplaces, schools and the community at large. The project's success was documented in a 1999 UNESCO film entitled "Our Lives", which serves as a powerful advocacy tool for sharing best practices to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS.

13. To leverage the potential of new technologies, UNIFEM is participating in the Women into the New Network for Entrepreneurial Reinforcement (WINNER) pilot project, which demonstrates how women entrepreneurs can benefit from the Internet and other electronic communication tools for e-commerce, distance education and business information, making use of the Technological, Trade and Information Promotion System network in five countries — Ecuador, Philippines, Nepal, Albania and Romania. UNIFEM is also collaborating with COMESA on improving women's access to information technology, including through tele-medicine and tele-trade centres.

14. UNIFEM has deepened gender awareness of microenterprise as a critical strategy in the fight against poverty, and built partnerships among microfinance institutions and banks around the world. As a result, there have been sizeable increases in the number of women with access to credit, capital and land, leading to economic self-reliance and sustainable incomes. In Romania, a partnership between UNIFEM, UNDP and the Japan Women-in-Development (WID) Fund led to the creation of two business development centres, which will introduce six pilot demonstration units for profitable small enterprises owned and run by women. In the arena of advocacy, MicrofinAfric, a network of 45 micro-credit institutions in Africa formed and nurtured by UNIFEM, articulated the concerns of African women to policy makers attending the 1999 Microcredit Summit. In India, a microcredit collective acts as a forum for self-help groups to gain access information and to reach policy-making entities.

15. In Gaza, UNIFEM-sponsored business counselling units for women in small and medium-sized enterprises offer courses on subjects such as starting a business, access to credit and ongoing vocational training. The units, which are run with the cooperation of the Ministry of Social Affairs, are leading to a shift in the focus of the Ministry's work with poor women, from a welfare approach to an emphasis on developing women's skills and capacities. In addition to increasing the number of women business owners in Gaza, the project has created a forum for micro-finance institutions working with women entrepreneurs. The units also provide a space for women to meet and exchange ideas outside the social constraints that often restrict their movements.

16. In southern Africa, UNIFEM has continued to help women miners to engage in dialogue with Governments with a view to influencing policy. Advocacy achievements include a pioneering survey of issues faced by women miners, the establishment of national women's mining associations for collective bargaining in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia, the United Republic of Tanzania and South Africa, and the creation of a regional lobbying force, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Women in Mining Trust. After the Trust's participation in a meeting of the SADC Ministers of Mining Committee in June 1999, the ministers directed all SADC Governments and mining institutions to mainstream gender into their programmes, projects and policies. With UNIFEM support, the Trust organized a training workshop for women mining entrepreneurs from nine countries, addressing mining and marketing techniques, environmental impacts, information technologies, credit, and HIV/AIDS prevention (Lusaka, October 1999).

2. Advocating for economic policies that account for gender

17. Mainstreaming gender issues into the policy and institutional dimensions of trade regimes continues to be a major focus of UNIFEM work. Special attention has been devoted to the analysis of different trade agreements and the identification of successful mainstreaming strategies, such as the creation of gender advisory structures and the participation of representatives from women's groups in trade negotiations.

18. At the global level, UNIFEM and the Centre of Concern sponsored a women's strategic planning seminar on gender and trade that brought together 48 economists, researchers, policy advocates, activists and educators from the South and North. The seminar engaged in discussions on trade and the impact that current trade agreements have on women in the various regions in which they work, so that strategies can be adopted in order to address pressing economic concerns.

19. In implementing conventional economic predictions, gender analysis can help to reveal the different rewards and risks that trade liberalization bring to men and women. These patterns are captured in a UNIFEM-sponsored research report, "Impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on female employment in Mexico". Using secondary data, it reviews the employment effects of NAFTA in sectors where women form a high percentage of the labour force — non-traditional export agriculture, and the textiles, apparel and *maquiladora* industries. The study finds that although NAFTA has favoured employment growth and that women form a high percentage of *maquiladora* employees in non-border areas, lack of alternative employment opportunities for men and reliance on high technology has led to a fall in women's share of employment relative to men in the faster growing, higher paying border factories. Industrial restructuring following the 1995 political and financial crises has further pushed women into the casual agricultural labour and informal sectors.

20. In the Caribbean, UNIFEM convened a regional seminar for policy makers, non-governmental organizations and development agencies to analyse the impact of trade policies such as NAFTA on the region and issued strategies that were then used by the regional negotiating machinery to develop a gender perspective in its activities.

21. In the Pacific, UNIFEM issued the first repo t ever to analyse the impact of multilateral and bilateral trade on women in four Pacific Island communities — Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga and Papua New Guinea. Following sessions to review the information with governmental planners and the Forum Secretariat, which advises Governments on trade-related issues, the report is now being distributed as an advocacy tool for women's non-governmental organizations. Lobbying efforts are now focused on building the capacity of governmental officials to adopt gender-sensitive measures, such as steps to cushion the particular social and economic impacts of trade agreements on women.

3. Making women's economic contributions visible to policy makers and ensuring women's economic rights

22. Measuring women's economic contributions to their families, communities and the economy is a critical step towards promoting gender-sensitive public policies. Gender-aware approaches to statistics make it possible for national surveys, data and budgets accurately to account for these contributions in the informal sector. UNIFEM work in this area has led to heightened recognition of women's roles and resulted in new structures and institutions that underscore women's participation.

23. In Southern Africa, UNIFEM has backed efforts to educate governments, policymakers and civil society about the gender implications of national budgets. Eight countries are now working with gender budgets or developing methodologies to introduce the practice. The project is also being replicated in the Indian Ocean States of Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros. The recent UNIFEM publication on this issue, *Engendering Budgets: The South African Experience*, has proven to be a valuable resource which can be used to guide future policies and enhance the capacities of planners, parliamentarians, researchers and non-governmental organizations. In Angola, a collaborative effort with UNFPA to train staff at the Ministry of Women's Affairs is leading to better data collection and analysis and the elaboration of the National Framework Programme on Gender. In Cuba, Panama, Mexico and Costa Rica, UNIFEM is encouraging users and collectors of statistics to develop gender-sensitive data that help frame public policies and programmes. In Mexico, UNIFEM assisted the Comisión Nacional de la Mujer to establish a system of indicators for monitoring and designing policies addressed to women.

24. In Mexico, a partnership between UNIFEM and UNDP contributed to the revision of the policy of the Nacional Financiera (NAFIN), a development bank. It now promotes women's equal access and participation in enterprise development. It has also started designing a profile of women entrepreneurs' potentials and needs and a database on women entrepreneurs that is linked to a system of gender-sensitive indicators, which is used to monitor the advancement of women in Mexico.

25. When financial crisis strikes or when trade liberalization and other economic structural adjustments are introduced, a disproportionate impact is felt by women who work in the insecure conditions of the informal sector. In recognition of these trends, UNIFEM is increasingly supporting the efforts of women in the informal sector to organize and advocate for their economic rights, and it is emphasizing improved data-gathering to account for women's economic contributions. These activities have fostered increased recognition of women's role in the informal

sector and resulted in the creation of new forms of protection for women workers.

26. In Sri Lanka, where two thirds of those leaving for overseas employment are women, UNIFEM has worked with the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment to establish the first coordinated effort to advocate and lobby for women migrant workers. Key actors have been brought together to mobilize on behalf of women migrants, including Air Lanka, the Bank of Sri Lanka and the Statistical Bureau. Policy makers increasingly acknowledge the vital contribution of women migrant workers to the economy, with the result that the focus of policy discussions is shifting from a welfare approach to recognition of the rights and risks of women migrants, who send home US$ 7 billion per year and are Sri Lanka's largest source of foreign exchange.

C. Engendering governance and leadership

27. Although women's participation is critical to building democracy and fostering social progress, in virtually all countries women are underrepresented in decision-making positions in Governments, civil society and the private sector. Under its governance and leadership programme, UNIFEM supports a growing movement of women leaders around the world who are dedicated to transforming decision-making processes with an agenda for peace, equality and social justice. UNIFEM programmes promote women's leadership in all sectors and across many different development forums.

28. The objectives are: to foster women's participation in decision-making at local, national and regional levels; to engender laws, programmes and policies that advance national, regional and international human development agendas to guarantee women's empowerment and rights; and to expand women's participation in peace-building and conflict resolution.

1. Fostering women's leadership

29. Support to national women's machineries and to women's organizations is an important tool employed by UNIFEM to promote gender-sensitive decision-making. The Fund has increasingly emphasized strategies that enhance women's leadership and political skills, bring together constituencies with common goals, and strengthen partnerships between Governments and civil society.

30. In Nigeria, UNIFEM supported workshops on women in public life and media training for political aspirants in the 1999 general elections. These, together with the efforts of women's advocacy groups, led to concrete results: the election of eight female candidates to national office; the creation of a Commission on Gender Equality to monitor the progress of engendering the democratic process; and the formation of the Women's Consultative Caucus and the Women Opinion Leadership Forum to promote affirmative action and increase women's political participation.

31. In the Dominican Republic, UNIFEM support to Centro Investigativa para la Accion Femenina (CIPAF) for a project on legal advice and gender training facilitated the induction of women to consultative committees in eight municipalities. Three municipalities have created specialized women's offices to support local governments. In El Salvador, the non-governmental organization Las Dignas was assisted in promoting women's leadership in six communities, resulting in the election of two women as municipal representatives and greater participation of women in the design and implementation of municipal policies.

32. In western Asia, UNIFEM is expanding the capacity of countries to support gender equality initiatives and gender mainstreaming in governmental planning and policy-making processes. These include support for the formulation of a national strategy for women's advancement in the United Arab Emirates and through partnership with national women's machineries and non-governmental organization partners in Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In the latter, the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation signed a Memorandum of Understanding in September, officially endorsing the collaborative roles of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the General Union of Palestinian Women acting as national women's machineries and implementing mainstreaming strategies.

33. In the Pacific, the UNIFEM Women in Politics programme has helped a record number of women realize their ambition to represent their people by offering support and training on basic techniques for

running effective campaigns. Women's representation has doubled over the last year wherever elections have taken place in the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Kiribati and Fiji.

34. A series of UNIFEM-sponsored training workshops for women members of political parties in Croatia, set up by the women's rights group Be Active Be Emancipated (BaBe), encouraged four participants to run for the 2000 parliamentary elections and led to the formation of a national network of women politicians. In Tajikistan, UNIFEM worked closely with the Women in Development Bureau to inform and mobilize women to participate in parliamentary and presidential elections in November 1999 and February 2000. As a result, eight were elected to the lower chamber, and four to the higher chamber. Women now constitute more than 13 per cent of the membership of the new parliament, including some of the highest levels.

2. Engendering laws, policies and programmes

35. UNIFEM is assisting women's organizations and national machineries in gender mainstreaming: highlighting the gender implications of policy decisions; providing gender-awareness training to policy and decision makers; and supporting the creation of gender-responsive policies and programmes across an array of institutions and sectors. The results have included more systematic implementation of national gender policies and greater coordination of networks of gender focal points across different ministries.

36. In September 1999 UNIFEM signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Mongolia in support of the implementation of Mongolia's National Programme of Action for the Advancement of Women. The agreement spells out six priority objectives related to those issues and commits the Government to the political and economic empowerment of women into the twenty-first century. Both parties will mobilize resources for these efforts through international organizations and the donor community and will jointly develop a country-specific programme based on an assessment of women's status in Mongolia, including indicators to monitor implementation.

37. In Kenya, a project with the Collaborative Centre on Gender helped sensitize parliamentarians and key parliamentary staff to the issues, paving the way for the overwhelming support they then gave to table the motion on affirmative action. In addition, long-term support by UNIFEM and other donors to the Ministry responsible for Women's Affairs resulted in the recent approval by the Cabinet of Gender Policy. In Rwanda, UNIFEM initiated a project to ensure that parliamentary debates and legislation would be gender sensitive. The Gender Desk set up in the Parliament, in collaboration with the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, was instrumental in the recent passage of an inheritance and succession bill guaranteeing women's inheritance and property rights.

38. In Indonesia, materials developed by UNIFEM led the director of the Village Community Development Department to sign a directive requiring gender analysis to be incorporated into the routine planning procedures at the village level. After a pilot programme in East Java and Yogyakarta, this approach is now being extended in all provinces. UNIFEM has fostered links between women's advocates and governmental planning processes across South Asia. In India, the Planning Commission has directed sectoral advisers to take into account recommendations from a UNIFEM-convened think tank on gender issues. As a follow-up measure, UNIFEM is supporting three information centres to disseminate information to women on a range of policy issues and to begin institutionalizing connections between women's organizations and governmental agencies.

3. Expanding participation at the peace table

39. UNIFEM work on women's participation in peace processes was strengthened significantly during 1999, emphasizing the critical need to harness women's perspectives and experiences as part of conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives. UNIFEM activities strengthen women's leadership at all levels in crisis situations to ensure their continued involvement in reconstruction and social development during times of peace. Projects have strengthened regional networks, provided training at the local and national levels, to enhance women's conflict resolution skills and their effectiveness in promoting women's human rights, and widened the space for women's participation as decision makers in all aspects of peacemaking.

40. In recognition of the growing experience of UNIFEM in promoting women's participation in peace processes, the General Assembly passed resolution

54/136 in December 1999. In it, the Assembly requests UNIFEM to work in partnership with other relevant United Nations agencies "to raise awareness about and strengthen the capacities of women in situations of armed conflict and to contribute to promoting the integration of a gender perspective in all peace-building activities, including through support to the full and equal participation of women at all levels, in all forums".

41. In May 1999, UNIFEM helped women leaders from conflict regions around the world to attend the Hague Appeal for Peace. Women advocates were enabled to develop a powerful collective voice and gain international visibility for the issue of women's participation in peace processes and to exchange best practices on engendering peace-building.

42. In Burundi, UNIFEM has been working with women leaders on both sides of a conflict spun from decades of ethnic and political violence. The project helped women of the three ethnic groups to convene to discuss issues of peace and security. UNIFEM also helped bring together women to address the Arusha peace process created in 1998 to negotiate an end to the conflict. The talks excluded women completely, on the premise that only official parties to the conflict should be involved. The Burundian parties eventually relented, permitting women to remain as temporary observers at Arusha. The women have received widespread support from the international community to sustain their advocacy activities and have participated in the Commission on Economic Reconstruction. The women's coalition has become a strong rallying point for women throughout Burundi.

43. In Liberia, UNIFEM, in partnership with UNDP, provided assistance for engendering post-conflict reconstruction processes and for enlarging the capacity of the Women and Children's Unit of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs to undertake gender analysis and gender impact assessments. UNIFEM support to the Federation of African Women's Peace Networks (FERFAP) — 13 women's groups from war-torn countries across the region — has resulted in the initiation of sensitive dialogues with Governments and intergovernmental organizations promoting peace in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

44. In Colombia, UNIFEM is helping local organizations to assist internally displaced women and raise national awareness about the gender dimensions of this issue and to strengthen legal mechanisms for the protection of the human rights of displaced women. Work in Guatemala focuses on strengthening women as advocates in the process of peace implementation.

45. Since 1998, UNIFEM has had projects in a number of countries in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Albania, and Tajikistan. These span a range of activities, from the development of university curricula on conflict resolution in the southern Caucasus, to institution-building for a new Training Centre for Psychological Rehabilitation in Tajikistan, to weapons collection and destruction in Albania. The recently established UNIFEM office in Kosovo is coordinating a gender task force, with representatives of donor Governments, civil society and international partners, to review and elaborate action plans for engendering specific components of the reconstruction agenda.

46. In South Asia, UNIFEM continues to work with a network of 60 non-governmental groups to lobby the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) for gender-responsive approaches to peace and human security issues within the region.

D. Promoting the realization of women's rights and the elimination of all forms of violence against women

47. Women's human rights are central to all UNIFEM work, defining both a key thematic area and guiding programming in other areas. The Fund's work in this area focuses on eliminating violence against women and girls by investing in prevention, protection and advocacy strategies; enhancing the ability of women and their organizations to advocate for women's human rights nationally, regionally and internationally; promoting gender in mainstream human rights machineries and organizations; and assisting effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

1. Ending violence against women

48. Over the past decade, the international community has strengthened its commitment to ending the pandemic of violence against women and girls, recognizing that it is a violation of their human rights

and a barrier to development. A significant number of new national laws criminalizing rape, female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual harassment and other forms of violence are proof of the growing commitment to stop the terrible toll that gender-based violence takes. UNIFEM has taken the lead in a number of United Nations inter-agency initiatives to address violence against women and girls.

49. In work to end gender-based violence, UNIFEM advocacy strategies and support to women's organizations have resulted in new or strengthened legislation to protect women, in increased national budgets for shelters and other services, and in the mobilization of new constituencies — especially men — for ending violence. UNIFEM continues to be challenged by inadequate data to assess the extent of gender-based violence and insufficient resources to respond to the increasing numbers of requests received by the UNIFEM Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women.

Inter-agency regional campaigns to end violence against women

50. In 1999, the second phase of the 1998 regional inter-agency campaigns (involving UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNCHR), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the regional commissions) to end gender-based violence were implemented in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific. The campaigns used innovative media and public education strategies to attract the interest and commitment of Governments, the donor community, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and women and men's groups. The advocacy strategies of the first phase were followed up with specific initiatives such as zero tolerance zones, community pacts against violence, and cooperation protocols between police and crisis centres.

51. In Brazil, the regional campaign encouraged the Ministry of Education to adopt a curriculum on intra-family violence for over 600 schools. In the Dominican Republic, an assessment is being conducted to identify forms of violence related to tourism, fostering collaboration among the government, community and entrepreneurial sectors. In Mexico, Sin Fronteras, an initiative to raise awareness about the risks of violence for migrant women, is being supported.

52. A regional project has been launched by UNIFEM in South Asia on the trafficking of women and girls. Consensus at the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on the need for a regional convention against trafficking, led to the establishment of the first anti-trafficking centre in Mumbai, a regional focal point for criminal networks.

53. In Senegal, the non-governmental organization Tostan has garnered pledges from more than 100 villages throughout the country to end female genital mutilation. Another group, Keur Yakaaru Jiggeeni, has set up the first shelter in Dakar to assist girls who are victims of domestic violence, rape and incest.

Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women

54. The Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women is an inter-agency effort managed by UNIFEM. The Trust Fund is the only multilateral funding mechanism to support innovative strategies for eradicating violence.

55. Today, through its support for strategic initiatives in the area of gender-based violence, the Trust Fund is widely recognized as a source of knowledge about the most effective ways both to prevent violence against women and to protect victims.

56. By the end of 1999, the Trust Fund had issued grants to 87 innovative projects in all programme regions. These ranged from promotion of gender-sensitive reporting by the media on violence against women, to training of judiciary and law enforcement personnel, to improving services for female victims of violence. In South Africa, an education campaign against gender violence in high schools has led to the integration of the subject into the official school curriculum. In Honduras, municipal governments have coordinated community initiatives on gender-based violence, including the use of popular sports to promote peer education for youth in high-incidence neighbourhoods.

57. The Trust Fund's capacity to provide knowledge was expanded in 1999. With funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the United

Nations Foundation, UNIFEM is analysing and documenting the most innovative efforts to end gender-based violence and building the capacity of women's organizations and networks working on violence to "tell the story" of their challenges, strategies and successes.

Using New Information Technologies to Eliminate Violence

58. On 8 March 1999, International Women's Day, UNIFEM coordinated an inter-agency global videoconference "A World Free of Violence Against Women". The power of new communications technology was used to bring together the voices of gender advocates from Nairobi, Mexico City, New Delhi and Strasbourg in the General Assembly chamber, showcasing successful initiatives to eliminate violence against women and girls. In November 1999, the General Assembly agreed to establish 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, an action recommended by UNIFEM at the videoconference. Another result was an increase in funds for gender-based violence: by the end of 1999, UNIFEM had mobilized a total of $3.9 million for these activities.

59. The <End Violence> discussion list, an electronic forum that was launched in October 1998 in preparation for the videoconference and continued until March 2000, brought 2,300 participants into an unprecedented international dialogue on issues and innovative strategies for the elimination of violence. An assessment undertaken of the value and impact of the <End Violence> initiative yielded important insights, as described by this participant from Russia: "I used <End Violence> resources a lot. I have made contacts with other women's groups ... Sometimes it makes me want to give up because the problems are so vast and the resources so few. But stories [from <End Violence>] always remind me I am not working alone ...".

2. Mainstreaming women's human rights

60. UNIFEM uses several strategies in mainstreaming women's human rights across the United Nations system. They include developing substantive analyses on the gender-specific dimensions of human rights; cooperating with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); cultivating national-level expertise on women's human rights; assisting in capacity-building; and working to ensure accountability for the integration of women's human rights.

61. In 1999, UNIFEM, OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, brought together women's human rights experts — independent experts as well as several special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights — to craft guidelines for integrating a gender perspective into United Nations human rights activities and programmes. The experts made several concrete recommendations, including examination of existing protocols to document violations of women's human rights and assessment of ways to develop more standardized approaches to documentation.

3. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

62. Since 1997, UNIFEM has supported programming on CEDAW, responding to the chair of the CEDAW Committee's request that UNIFEM "be to CEDAW what UNICEF is to the Convention on the Rights of the Child". UNIFEM has begun to use CEDAW, the "Women's Bill of Rights", as one of the guideposts for its rights-based programming. A full-time adviser on CEDAW was appointed in early 1999. The work has focused on documenting concrete uses of the Convention to bring about positive change for women at the national level. Globally, UNIFEM is supporting a project that works with women in 10 countries to produce reports on the status of implementation which can be used as a basis for national advocacy strategies.

63. UNIFEM has assisted with the translation of CEDAW into vernacular languages in 10 countries in Africa, and wide dissemination has meant greatly enhanced access for a growing number of advocates. The Fund also worked in tandem with non-governmental organization partners to train over 560 women leaders across the region in understanding the importance of the Convention. A project to train journalists in eastern and southern Africa on reporting on CEDAW has resulted in a network of journalists that is focused on gender issues and women's human rights violations.

64. In the Caribbean, media professionals have been taught to understand and increase coverage of issues

related to CEDAW and women's human rights. In Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados, radio and video skits on CEDAW were produced in collaboration with local political and entertainment personalities, and broadcast on stations throughout the region.

65. In India, a meeting between non-governmental organizations and the Government on its report to the CEDAW Committee in January 2000 began a new line of communication between civil society and the Government on the use of the Convention and the meaning of equality for women.

66. Recognizing the need for human rights dialogue in the Near East to include Islamic discourse, UNIFEM helped bring together women's rights activists, religious scholars and politicians for a landmark discussion on CEDAW in the context of Islamic laws (Amman, October 1999). Participants considered variations in Islamic law throughout the Arab world and discussed ways of easing discrepancies and evaluating governmental reservations to CEDAW. In March, UNIFEM moved this critical dialogue into an international forum at a panel at the Preparatory Committee for the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action.

67. From February to August 1999, UNIFEM and the International Women's Rights Action Watch for Asia and the Pacific (IWRAW-Asia Pacific) hosted an Internet discussion group, CEDAW-in-Action, in response to requests from women's human rights activists, to exchange ideas and strategies on using CEDAW as a tool at the national level. With UNIFEM support, IWRAW-Asia Pacific continues to bring non-governmental organization advocates to sessions of the Committee in New York for training on developing national strategies to enhance implementation of the treaty and to meet with committee members.

III. Supporting the United Nations reform process to strengthen gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment

68. Efforts continued in 1999 to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to support women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. UNIFEM focused its efforts on the following key priorities: strengthening the resident coordinator system at the country level in its capacity to mainstream gender in the context of United Nations reform; collaborating with United Nations funds, programmes, and specialized agencies to share skills and perspectives, and increase synergy with a view to supporting the United Nations system in mainstreaming gender throughout its policies, programmes, and projects; supporting the engendering of the United Nations reform process through involvement in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) processes to ensure that gender issues and perspectives are integrated into the overall reform programme as well as into all the instruments, guidelines and strategies that are developed and implemented to support the reform.

69. The strategic placement of UNIFEM gender advisers in Nigeria, China, Morocco, Guatemala and Kazakhstan has provided support to the United Nations resident coordinator system in mainstreaming gender into the common country assessments (CCA) and UNDAF. In Nigeria, the gender adviser guided the inter-agency thematic group on gender in producing a multilevel training manual on gender mainstreaming, which has been enthusiastically endorsed by the country team. In Ghana, the gender adviser's strong inputs in shaping the first UNDAF programme bore fruit when gender was adopted as the focus of the first programme implemented under the Framework.

70. The UNDG Inter-agency Sub-Group on Gender (convened by UNIFEM with 10 United Nations agencies participating) saw concrete results in its efforts to mainstream gender into the United Nations reform process at the country level. UNDG guidelines now state that data should be disaggregated by sex. Most of the recommendations for gender-sensitive language found a home in the final set of guidelines for the assessments, UNDAF and the resident coordinator annual report. Inputs to the United Nations country teams by the gender theme groups — in which UNIFEM regional programme directors were particularly active — also led to striking results. The India UNDAF programme identified gender equality and decentralization as its two themes. In Mozambique, the Government and the United Nations country team are working together on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

71. The close relationship between UNIFEM and UNFPA strengthened the programme to provide

technical backstopping in gender, population and development (GPD). Nine GPD advisors have been assigned to eight UNFPA country support teams, thereby strengthening country-level operational linkages between the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action. Further, UNFPA and UNIFEM signed a letter of understanding to synchronize their activities under a European Union project for women's reproductive rights and economic empowerment.

72. The 19 gender specialists assigned to different countries under a collaborative UNDP/UNIFEM/UNV programme to mainstream gender issues at the national level were especially active during 1999. Activities included: coordinating the Inter-agency Gender Theme Group in Mozambique; organizing a poster competition for children depicting gender equality in Viet Nam; educating policy-makers on violence against women in Cameroon; providing CEDAW training in Malawi and Turkmenistan, and against sexual harassment in Lebanon; and systematically sharing experiences, resources and viewpoints through a vibrant e-mail network. The Malawi training led to the recommendation to establish a national CEDAW working group to prepare country reports and monitor violations.

73. With women now at the epicentre of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, any sustainable response to curb the rate of infection of women requires an understanding of how unequal gender relations contribute to the spread of the disease. "Gender-focused responses to address the challenges of HIV/AIDS", a project supported jointly by UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM, links policy, research and advocacy strategies at the national and local levels, launching pilot initiatives in the Bahamas, China, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Senegal, Viet Nam, and Zimbabwe. In Senegal, recommendations were made to include sex education in the formal school curriculum. In India, research findings are helping public health officials and HIV/AIDS organizations target information to women at risk. Mexican participation in a media workshop led to numerous articles in a wide range of publications, including one that won the prestigious Premio Nacional de Periodismo Rosario Castellanos 1999-2000 award.

A. Implementing the Beijing Platform for Action

74. The preparatory process for the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action — marked by United Nations regional and subregional meetings around the world — offered unparalleled opportunities to gain visibility and renewed political will for gender equality initiatives. In May 1999 UNIFEM launched a strategy to support national and regional preparations for the five-year review. The strategy focused on strengthening governmental and non-governmental organization partnerships to undertake comprehensive and visible assessment activities for the review and develop effective follow-up strategies; identifying, documenting and disseminating good practices and innovative strategies to strengthen recommendations emerging from the process; and facilitating access to and participation in the review process by governmental and non-governmental organizations worldwide, particularly through the use of new and traditional information and communication technologies and methods. UNIFEM support preparations for the review has taken into account the need to institute immediate and bold follow-up to the assessment process.

75. To implement this strategy, UNIFEM placed the highest priority on investing in national and regional activities. Examples of the range of activities and results supported by UNIFEM during 1999 at national, regional and global levels are outlined below.

Supporting the preparatory process at the regional level

76. At the regional level, UNIFEM worked in partnership with the regional commissions in Asia and the Pacific, Western Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Europe to support preparations, develop background papers, and ensure that non-governmental organization partners were prepared to participate effectively at the regional preparatory meetings.

77. UNIFEM activities in the Asia and Pacific region provide an example of the way in which its comprehensive support to Governments and non-governmental organizations generated broader understanding and participation in the review process. Since 1996, UNIFEM has been facilitating biennial ministerial conferences in South Asia to review

progress on implementation of the Platform for Action. Specific preparations included support for a South Asia regional meeting in Kathmandu to review the situation of women in the region which brought non-governmental organizations together for the first time since 1995 to discuss a regional agenda. In Nepal and India, UNIFEM facilitated consultations between governmental officials and non-governmental organizations for the review reports. UNIFEM also sponsored the Asia/Pacific regional non-governmental organization symposium, organized by the Asia Caucus of Non-Governmental Organizations and Southeast Asia Watch (SEAWATCH), which brought together representatives from 26 countries to review and assess progress in implementing the Platform for Action. UNIFEM additionally worked in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in organizing the official regional preparatory meeting in October 1999, for which it prepared a key background paper and briefings for the official meeting and provided support for non-governmental organization participation.

78. In Africa, the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women for the mid-term review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action was held in Addis Ababa in November 1999. During the Conference a declaration and a plan of action were adopted, and modalities for Africa's participation at the global review were agreed. UNIFEM was a member of the Technical Advisory Planning Committee for the Conference. Through its field offices, UNIFEM supported the preparation of national reports in 16 countries and the process of dialogue and consensus-building between government delegates and non-governmental organizations in eight countries.

79. In Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNIFEM recognized the critical nature of facilitating the creation of strong and sustainable government and non-governmental organization partnerships to support preparations, since regional realities had changed so drastically since 1995 and opportunities for participation had opened up considerably. UNIFEM held two preparatory workshops — one in Central and Eastern Europe and one in the Commonwealth of Independent States — at which government and non-governmental organization representatives participated in training to prepare them for the official regional meeting of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). At the two meetings, participants crafted amendments to the ECE draft agreed conclusions and created their own statement of key challenges, achievements and lessons learned concerning implementation of the Platform for Action in the region.

80. The preparations that UNIFEM supported in Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States had important outcomes. Women participating in those meetings launched a coalition of non-governmental organizations for the CIS, which is currently under formation. Non-governmental organizations developed a declaration entitled Rebuilding Peace: The Priority of Women from Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The agreements reached at the preparatory meetings facilitated a strong and collective presence of non-governmental organizations from the two regions at the ECE regional preparatory meeting in January 2000. UNIFEM helped more than 50 non-governmental organization representatives to attend the ECE meeting in Geneva, and worked in close collaboration with ECE to organize the non-governmental organization and governmental meetings that took place.

81. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNIFEM worked with a wide range of non-governmental organizations and government partners to expand participation in the assessment process. The Fund's work in the Southern Cone of Latin America demonstrates how these initiatives build on work that has taken place since 1995. UNIFEM has provided post-Beijing follow-up support to national machineries and non-governmental organizations in every country in the Southern Cone, including support for the development of national plans and collaborative efforts of government and non-governmental organizations to develop tracking and monitoring approaches. Preparations for the five-year review focused on synthesizing progress and challenges at the national level. For instance, in Chile, UNIFEM supported the national women's machinery to publish two reports on implementation of the Platform for Action and organize 13 regional and one national seminar involving an estimated 15,000 women in the country. In the longer term, the meetings supported the development of a second national Equal Opportunities Plan.

Getting the word out about the five-year review

82. A key concern for UNIFEM has been the extent to which knowledge and information about the five-year review process is widely disseminated and used to increase political commitment to implementation of the Platform for Action. UNIFEM supported a wide variety of information and communication strategies to ensure that activities at the country level could influence and benefit from regional and global initiatives.

83. As a key partner in WomenWatch (the electronic gateway initiated by UNIFEM, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)), UNIFEM brought its considerable experience in using new information and communication technologies to elicit broad civil society and government participation. Between September and December 1999, WomenWatch launched a series of electronic working groups on the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action. Each electronic discussion lasted six weeks. More than 10,000 people signed on to the dialogues, which formed the basis of an official background document (E/CN.6/2000/PC/CRP.1) circulated to the delegates to the final Preparatory Committee meeting for the review.

84. In preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, UNIFEM and the United Nations Non-governmental Liaison Service produced a widely used publication, "Putting gender on the agenda", which provided non-governmental organizations and government delegates with an insider view and guide to the process of negotiating official United Nations documents and participating in these meetings. For the five-year review, UNIFEM and the Liaison Service updated the publication. It was widely disseminated throughout the preparatory process and has been replicated by non-governmental organizations, both as a printed document and on web sites. Additionally, UNIFEM launched a relevant section of its web site in October 1999, posting regular updates on planning and participation.

85. UNIFEM supported the work of numerous non-governmental organizations, particularly those experienced in alternative media, to call attention to the five-year review. UNIFEM and WomenWatch provided the founding support to WomenAction 2000, a coalition of 16 women's alternative media organizations from around the world. WomenAction 2000 implemented a collective strategy to build national capacity to use electronic media and regularly disseminated relevant information linking new information technologies to radio, fax broadcasts and newsletters.

Strengthening the assessments that inform the five-year review

86. A central focus of UNIFEM preparations for the review was the preparation of a new biennial report, *Progress of the World's Women*. With emphasis on increasing accountability for gender equality goals, the report offers fresh ideas and new insights into the process of setting targets and indicators to measure how far the world has come in achieving gender equality. *Progress* highlights innovative approaches to supporting women's empowerment and rights from countries worldwide, with a particular focus on expanding women's economic equality and rights. A preview of *Progress*, called *Targets and Indicators*, was produced for the final Preparatory Committee meeting for the review (March 2000). It made information about the gender dimensions of key development indicators and goals available to delegates at the meeting and was widely praised as having made a unique contribution to the discussions.

87. Analysis of experiences at the national and regional level were also produced in preparation for the five-year review, including a good practice series that analysed mainstreaming gender into the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) institutional machinery; the building capacity of government institutions and women's non-governmental organizations to use gender budgeting as a way of increasing accountability; and supporting women's groups and associations to mainstream gender into the mining industry. In Kenya, UNIFEM supported a media initiative to publish a popular analysis of national implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. In South Asia, UNIFEM has documented the process of holding biannual meetings to increase accountability for implementation of the Platform for Action. In the Caribbean, UNIFEM co-produced a video with the International Labour Organization on women's labour rights.

B. Countering media stereotypes

88. Media representation of women's roles contributes considerably to the perpetuation of negative gender stereotypes, but media can also play a proactive role in promoting positive images. UNIFEM emphasizes promoting coverage of gender-equality initiatives and inspiring examples of women's empowerment strategies. Projects include a focus on training journalists, using radio to sensitize communities on gender equality issues, and enabling women leaders to use the media as a tool for promoting gender-responsive policies and programmes.

89. UNIFEM supported the participation and capacity building for Asian women journalists and non-governmental organizations at the ESCAP Beijing+5 preparatory meeting (Bangkok, October 1999). The resulting press releases were circulated to over 100 media outlets within the region and elsewhere. A follow-up press conference organized in Manila in early November resulted in coverage by national television stations and daily newspapers. In Africa, UNIFEM facilitated gender-awareness training for over 200 media professionals, and supported the establishment of networks of media practitioners and an information database on women journalists in the West Africa region. The resulting alliance with the media was reflected in the unprecedented gender-sensitive media support for the UNIFEM-led inter-agency campaign to end violence against women and girls in Africa.

90. In Mexico, UNIFEM assisted Comunicación e Información de la Mujer in forming networks of women journalists in Central America and the Caribbean in order to share information on gender issues and increase media programming with a gender perspective. Workshops in the Caribbean brought together journalists and non-governmental organizations around CEDAW, and have led to closer ties between the two groups and greater coverage of women's human rights issues in the mainstream press. Rural and indigenous women in the Andean region also learned about human rights and gender issues through UNIFEM-supported radio broadcasts that targeted audiences in remote and isolated communities.

IV. Building a knowledge base on women's empowerment and gender equality

91. In 1999, UNIFEM continued to focus on establishing systems to support learning that are closely linked to UNIFEM strategic objectives and to engage in consultations — both internally and externally — to shape a learning process that has full staff participation and a supportive infrastructure. In the course of developing the Strategy and Business Plan for 2000-2003, opportunities were explored for developing performance measures and incentive systems, an organizational structure, work processes, and technological infrastructure to support learning, so that the Fund's commitment to learning is sustainable and directly relevant to operational programmes.

92. The UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan 2000-2003 has been developed as a framework for strengthened follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action. The new Plan takes into account the results achieved, lessons learned and gaps remaining from the previous Plan (1997-1999), as well as changes in the larger social, economic, political and cultural contexts. It retains a number of the principles that framed the previous cycle. UNIFEM can point to numerous examples of how its programmes and approaches generated new and increased resources and political will for gender equality, stimulated new or strengthened legislation and policies to support gender equality, increased the availability and use of data disaggregated by sex, and supported new structures to increase sustainability of gender interventions. The new Plan benefits from many lessons learned in achieving these results. It also addresses areas needing strengthening, such as the mainstreaming of a rights-based approach into all UNIFEM programmes and the scaling up of successful strategies to end gender-based violence.

A. Using knowledge to increase accountability

93. Throughout 1999, work on the UNIFEM flagship publication, *Progress of the World's Women*, acted as the fulcrum for gathering and sharing knowledge among staff, an impressive group of advisers from around the world, programme partners, donors and other United Nations organizations. *Progress of the*

World's Women 2000 assesses what was achieved for women's economic empowerment and gender equality from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s; it provides a tool to assess how far countries have moved on the road to equality and shares the experiences of organizations worldwide that are developing strategies to increase accountability, commitment and transformation (ACT) to fulfil commitments to achieve gender equality made at world conferences throughout the 1990s.

B. Investing in an analysis of lessons learned for ending violence against women

94. The learning component of the UNIFEM Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women continuously explores what works and what impedes efforts to end gender-based violence. Supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the United Nations Foundation, the learning component is analysing the work of Trust Fund grantees in advocating for protective legislation and policies, changing entrenched attitudes that promote violence, and involving men in ending violence. The results of this analysis will be published and widely distributed in 2000.

C. Harnessing information technology for knowledge-sharing

95. Throughout the past year, UNIFEM has undertaken creative uses of new information and communications technologies (ICTs) for knowledge sharing. The <End Violence> list, which attracted 2,300 participants, continued to share information on cross-fertilizing strategies for promoting legislative reform, strengthened protective services, and a host of other operational challenges for ending violence against women. Through participation as a key partner in WomenWatch, UNIFEM and the Division for the Advancement of Women hosted 11 global discussions on the critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform. These discussions, which attracted more than 10,000 subscribers, were transformed into an official document, submitted to the final preparatory session for the review of the Platform for Action.

96. Two other inter-agency initiatives focused on knowledge-sharing using ICTs. UNIFEM led an inter-agency task force involving UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, and Habitat to collect nearly 100 examples of good practice in gender mainstreaming and implementing the Beijing Platform from 25 United Nations organizations. UNIFEM created the database to make them accessible and has now made them available on WomenWatch (http://www.un.org/womenwatch). Finally, knowledge-sharing and networking have been an integral part of the activities of the UNV Gender Specialists in different countries backstopped by UNIFEM in partnership with UNDP and UNV. An electronic discussion has provided this community of volunteers with a platform for sharing approaches to gender training and mainstreaming at the country level, identifying new resource materials, and providing peer-to-peer feedback on ideas and questions as they arise.

V. Financial management

97. In May 1997, the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board approved the UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan for the period 1997-1999. During the 1998-1999 biennium, UNIFEM proceeded with the implementation of the plan focusing on its three thematic areas and adopting the principle of results-based management. Two of the objectives of the Strategy and Business Plan were an expansion of the donor base and an increase in donor contributions.

98. Total contributions for UNIFEM increased by $0.4 million, or 1.3 per cent to $23.1 million, from $22.7 million in 1998. The $23.1 million includes voluntary contributions of $1.3 million from three major donors which were received in the new financial year. There was an increase of $1.0 million in the actual amounts received for core contributions, from $15.8 million in 1998 to $16.8 million in 1999. There was a net decrease in cost-sharing and trust fund contributions of $1.9 million, from $6.9 million in 1998 to $5.0 million in 1999. This was primarily due to the non-receipt of funds previously committed by donors.

99. Project expenditure for regular (voluntary) increased by $0.1 million, or 1 per cent, to $10.2 million, from $10.1 million in 1998. Expenditures including support costs for cost-sharing and sub-trust fund projects increased by $0.5 million, or 12 per cent, from $4.3 million in 1998 to $4.8 million in 1999.

100. Budget allocations for 1999 and future years that are as yet unspent amount to $19.5 million and will be paid from available resources amounting to $19.1 million at 31 December 1999, and from contributions receivable of $2.7 million. The level of the Operational Reserve was reviewed in accordance with Executive Board decision 97/4 of January 1997, and the Reserve was increased to $6.7 million at the end of 1999.

Notes

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] *Progress of the World's Women* is supported by the Department for International Development, United Kingdom, the United Nations Population Fund, and the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency.